

merely some propriety of discretion or good taste, that creates it, is in every instance a cause for deep regret. Should not a man tremble to feel himself not daring to confide to an equal and a mortal, what has been all observed by the Supreme Witness and Judge? And the consideration of the large proportion of men, constituting such instances, throws a melancholy hue over the general human character! It has several times, in writing this essay, occurred to me what strangers men may be to one another, whether as to the influences which have determined their characters, or as to the less obvious parts of their conduct. What strangers too we may be with persons who have the art of concealment, to the principles which are at this moment prevailing in the heart. Each mind has an interior apartment of its own, into which none but itself and the Divinity can enter. In this secluded place the passions mingle and fluctuate in unknown agitations. Here all the fantastic and all the tragic shapes of imagination have a haunt, where they can neither be invaded nor descried. Here the surrounding human beings, while quite insensible of it, are made the subjects of deliberate thought, and many of the designs respecting them revolved in silence. Here projects, convictions, vows, are confusedly scattered, and the records of past life are laid. Here in solitary state sits Conscience, surrounded by her own thunders, which sometimes sleep, and sometimes roar, while the world does not know. The secrets of this apartment, could they have been even but very partially brought forth, might have been fatal to that eulogy and splendour with which many a piece of biography has been exhibited by a partial and ignorant friend. If, in a man's own account of himself, written on the supposition of being seen by any other person, the substance of the secrets of this apartment be brought forth he throws open the last asylum of his character, where it is well if there be nothing found that will distress and irritate his most partial friend, who may thus become the ally of his conscience to condemn, without the leniency which even conscience acquires from self-love. And if it be not brought forth, where is the integrity or value of the history, supposing it pretend to afford a full and faithful estimate; and what ingenuous man could bear to give a delusive assurance of his being, or having been, so much more worthy of